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THE BOOK OF THE WHITE BUTTERFLIES

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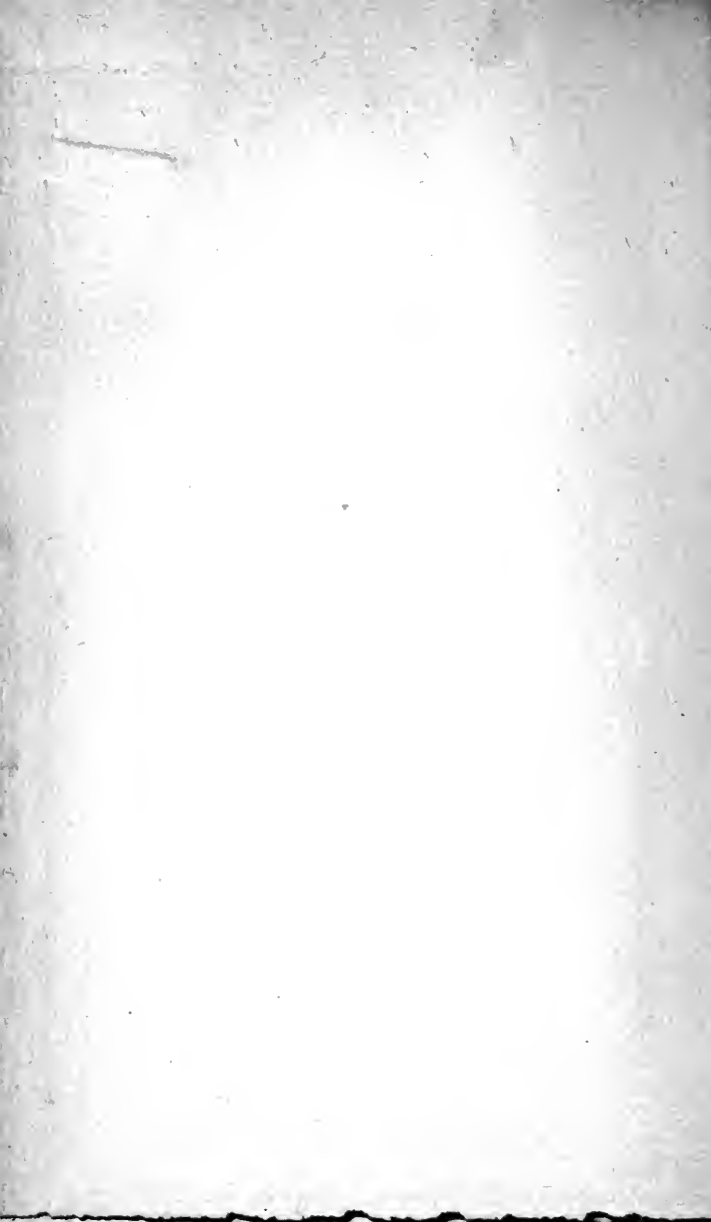
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THE BOOK OF THE WHITE
BUTTERFLIES



THE
BOOK OF THE WHITE
BUTTERFLIES

BY

MARGARET J. BORTHWICK



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THE BOOK OF THE WHITE BUTTERFLIES

WHITE BUTTERFLIES

THEY ask me the meaning of my dreams. Why ask me? Because I print a dream must I also append a meaning? A dream is a thought, sometimes only the casket that encloses the thought, as a flower encloses the perfume. One does not ask the meaning of a scent, or put into black and white, the why and the wherefore of the faint delicate perfume of the night scented stock. To put a meaning to a dream, were to explain as a mere matter of fact the flight of a butterfly, or the first spring notes of a starling. Elusive, beautiful, the soul of the moment to those who seek. We find their meaning in the spirit of the soul that is within us. Each one for himself must find the perfume that he loves, the soul of the dream that responds to his soul's expectation. To me it is a breath of delight from many thoughts, and the meaning lies hid in my heart; others will read as they find need in their own heart, the meaning will come at their wishing, like the perfume that comes from the unseen breath of the heart of a wood. Let each for

himself find the flower of his thought. Let each for himself clothe the green stems with fragrance, sing in the sunshine as the rhythm delights them, or alas, find no pleasure, no joy, because for them the dreams have no meaning.

To me they appear but as dreams of emotion, like the treasures in my locked inlaid box of scents, sweet and full of meaning if the box be unlocked, and each delicate perfume be brought from its crystal bottle separately and by itself; but if all the bottles be opened, and the scents smelt one after the other, the pleasure is gone, the soul of each is lost, and the name and meaning of each cannot be given: as each different flower is lost in the sense of the whole. Each by itself has a name, and a distinct perfume, but without pause or thought, the soul of the scent is lost, and Spanish sweet pea, and the wild rose from the hedge are but as the violet, or the old stock from the garden.

Once I read as I dreamt in a garden one sunny noon. I read in the sunshine and took no heed of passing things, when suddenly out of the depths of my reading I became aware of two white butterflies, circling round my head. In all the garden for days before, I had seen no butterflies. That morning I was feeling very much alone, and a feeling of "wanting" all about me. But with the circling sweep of the butterflies, came a sense of happiness, of security, of welfare, that came with the moment. I did not see where the butterflies went to, but

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they had left their message. Can one ascribe a meaning to such a dream unless one gathers into oneself the sense of sweetness, and well being, that came with the beautiful dream of white butterflies in that garden at noon?

THE MARK OF A HIGH CALLING

ALL through the afternoon I had been trying to arrange in my mind thoughts of what I took to be a legend of the robin. I could not quite make out, how much was imagination and how much memory of some tale, heard or read long before.

I thought of a long past day, dark with unutterable gloom, when even the birds must have been silent with a tremendous sorrow. I thought of how one small brown bird had plucked at the thorny crown on a wondrous Head. I saw the breast of the bird all stained with flaming crimson as it pressed its heart hard against the thorns, striving to tear away the twisted wreath that pierced that sacred Brow. I thought of how through all the centuries afterwards the robin red breast had carried the mystic mark from that divine scene of sorrow. I sat at my window wondering over the scene, wondering if I dare attempt to write the story. I sat alone in the house watching the beauty of the spring day, watching the silvery golden afternoon light on tree, and field, and far hill-side. Noting

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unconsciously, the blue of the sky, the deep gray masses of cloud; the quiet beauty of the whole in contrast to the dule and sorrow of that long past day. That scene I was trying to picture in words. Suddenly as I had almost arrived at the full picture of the bird, trying its utmost with beak and claw to tear those thorns from that Brow; I felt almost a presence with me, and my heart and face smiled, as a robin flew on to my window, lifting its crimson breast to the sky it lighted on the sill settling but an instant, then flew into a tree just out of sight, and burst into full song. Then I knew that it was permitted to me, to write again the story of why the robin carries its crimson breast.

THE STILLNESS OF A WINTER'S AFTERNOON

I KNEEL at my window and say to my heart, "What doest thou?" "Nothing," comes the answer, "nothing but keeping still."

Drink in the stillness of the mild winter's afternoon. See the stillness of the trees black against the sky: see the quietude of the gray-green fields sloping up to the wood. The very movement of the sheep on the hill-side is of a quietness that makes for silence. The gentle stillness is not silence, there are sounds all round; the movement of the soft wind in the grass, the rustle of the ivy on the

old plane trees, the chatter of the birds on their way to rest, the winter song of the robin that speaks of spring at hand! All this is not silence though it but emphasizes the still quietness of the winter's day. It is January and there is a touch of spring in the air, the quietness of a waiting time. The fullness of the ruddy glow on the bud branches of the lime trees, the undergrass is green with the mildness of the season, the mosses are fresh as they have not been sodden by a heavy fall of snow, the snowdrops are coming out, and in some places the aconites are glowing golden in the grass: these all silently and softly speak of love and of life.

The silence speaks of love, and the touch of spring speaks of love, but it is in the stillness we find the clue to the thoughts the quiet gray day brings.

Thoughts of the beauty of stillness.

Thoughts of the silence that Maeterlinck sings.

Wells of silence found in the depths of one's own nature from whence spring, and can only spring, all the rich fruition of the coming year.

Out of great noise may come great cleansing, out of great silence comes great creation. Down in the depths of the earth from the silence of the dust rises the essence of life.

Deep wells of silence are at the "bottom," the root, from thence come the most wonderful happenings. Great love, great stillness. Great thoughts, great silence—life springs so silently, spring comes

so quietly. There is the sound of spring in the air because the silence of life is a sound—a perception of life, of movement, makes a sound in the mind.

It is the peace of a great silence that makes its life; without absolute peace can be no real silence. Peace is only found in love without fear, and love without fear is life: the best life here or the life hereafter. The silence of soul we find in those who are without fear is surely a most beautiful thing, and their stillness is surely that of great growth, of life at its truest and best.

Security of heart, soul, or mind makes for great strength, strength makes for silence. Without security how noisily we are tossed about. Love flees before drifting, noise—distracting thoughts and ways; and without love must come fear, must come unquiet moods, unquiet ways. But with deep, strong, silent hearts we find true strong life-giving, love-keeping men and women, who in the silence of great love await the oncoming spring.

THE DREAM OF THE THREE WOODS

I REMEMBER a bank of wood lying to the sun, a small plantation of straggly trees. There at the end of April or beginning of May, in weather, when the heart sings, when the whole world laughs, and there are wisps of snow about the hills, blue sky flecked with white clouds overhead, then one

would find on the bank, patches of sweet violets, very small but very sweet. They grew in a few small patches hardly more than about twenty or thirty yards in length, there one could always be sure of finding sweetness, sweetness that one could gather in handfuls, and carry the memory with one for years afterwards. The wood came down to a small watercourse that was built in, so as to supply a farm thrashing-mill; and the violets spread over the burn down to the wall on the side of the farm road. There they grew at their own sweet will, almost on to the road itself. When I first went to live at the farm few knew of the violets, few people thought of such a plant growing there wild, and that it was one of the few spots in England where real old wild violets could be found, deep purple violets.

I daresay since the railway came within a mile of the spot others have found them, as town eyes out in the country are quick to find out-of-the-way treasures. Another April picture I remember, not far from the violets about half a mile further up the burn, nearer the hill tops. A ruined thatched cottage; the old home of a faithful shepherd family with the old clan name Macgregor; who lived now in a new slated cottage nearer the farm homestead and close to the violet wood. Round the ruin were, and still are, the remains of an old garden. Here, on bleak days in April, too far north and too cold to find them in March, one finds a patch of bright

golden double daffodils; a splash of colour on the green hill-side. There they grow year after year never spreading very far but always there. Sometimes in bloom at Easter, sometimes later: if ready at Easter the farm children would gather them, to use as dyes for their Easter eggs. Pace eggs as we used to call them in that old Northumbrian valley, Good Pace Day being Easter Sunday. On Monday the children asked eggs from the neighbours and coloured them with daffodil blooms, with whin blossoms, onion skins or with scarlet flannel. Afterwards dressed in their best with something new on for luck, they bowled their dyed eggs in the nearest grassy field. One almost thinks of those woods and flowers as dream flowers of thought. One wood especially so, that again, lay open to the sun, and there the wild blue hyacinths grew so closely, so thickly packed together that looking through the trees one saw a fairy mist of blue haze brooding over the carpet of the wood. One thinks that, as the bells rang, the flowers breathed out a visible breath of beautiful blue perfume. Dreams now to me, to some still, clear realities none can forget; memories to give sweetness to life for many days.

I DREAMED

I DREAMED out of the past, a shaft of light striking up, over, and through my life, I see myself standing on the edge of an immense sheet of gleaming sullen water. A river in full flood brimming from bank to bank with an opaque oily blackness of swiftly-flowing water. A tidal river flowing through bleak flat-land to the sea. There I stand looking across to the faintly-seen dark ridge of bank on the other side. I stand waiting, hesitating to cross, wishing to do so, and not deterred by thought of danger; as how could I walk through those rolling masses of black water with safety.

Suddenly as I watch there comes up out of the distant horizon; gleaming over the water, turning it in places to pure silver and gold, with black blue and green lights on its heaving tide, a great shaft of light. The light strikes up over the sky, and is reflected on the water. A dream vision of northern lights piercing the darkness of a dream horizon. Then across the wide stretch of murky river faintly comes a voice. A well-known familiar voice, so familiar that even in the half-lit night I can make out the figure on the further side.

“Do not try to cross, it is too dangerous. I will come to you. Stay where you are. I will come to

you, I will cross to you." The voice came clear out of the gloom.

Then I awoke.

N.B.—In my mind for years, but evidently, at a call for help, it came to be written.

LIGHT AND SHADE

I WAS thinking of being in the shade, living in the shade, and that in the shade, one cannot cast a shadow. To have any shadow at all, there must be great light. Those who throw shadows, how careful they should be upon whom the shadows fall. We all want to stand in a great light: but we often forget the shadows. Those of us who are in the shade need not fear where our shadows fall: we have none, we are in the shadow. The shadow thrower is between us and the light. We can live in the shade so easily, but we would rather get out into the light: then we in our turn would become throwers of shadow. This sounds like glass houses and stone throwing, may be in some ways the same thought at the root.

There are so many ways of throwing shadows. We cannot always choose our light, that shines on us; but we can generally choose where we will stand, so that the light does shine upon us.

Do we always think where the shadow will fall, on some wayside flower that needs shade, and cannot stand the full blaze of sunshine, or do we take the light out of some brother's eyes who would so gladly bask in the sunshine? Shadows sometimes are cheerful changing things, plays of light and shade over those upon whom they are cast; but it is a terrible thing to absorb so much light that one throws a great vast shadow, keeping the light from all around.

How then are we to get this light and so regulate our shadow-throwing powers, that we give only sufficient to those around? I suppose we must learn to be transparent, clear as crystal, then the light will shine through us, softened perhaps but not darkened. Then as we throw a shadow, we veil the light and let it come gently through us to the feebler nature that sought the shade.

The strong light of the world needs often to be kept from some natures, they cannot stand its fierceness, it forces them forward, like hot-house plants, and without shelter and shade they burn and consume themselves in its heat. The strong light of sorrow; I do not think sorrow is always shade, it is a light in itself sometimes, and those who stand in its great radiance throw a great shade on those around, a darkness even, against which they must guard, lest they in their sorrow darken other lives. The light of sorrow can be illuminating to ourselves, so we must keep the shadow from falling on some

poor wandering unhappy one by our side. I think as comfort:—as a great shadow, the grateful shade of a great rock in a weary land. We in the heat, light, and blaze of the battle of life draw to those sorrowful ones, to those who in the tender light of understanding can throw a shadow over our hearts, who can comfort by the shadow of a word. They have stood between us and the fierce light of day and so we can now rest. There is a wonderful shadow thrown over all the world and wherever we go it is there,—the shadow of the cross. The cross seems to be its own light, its own shadow. All the world is a cross, wherever we look it stands: message of a great light. We see it in the clear crystal of the snow, we see it wherever line meets line, we see it where human hands have laboured; where straight path meets straight road, there lies the mark of the cross. It upholds the world: take away the sign of the cross and the world would fall to pieces leaving but a barren mass of lifeless matter.

Shadow of the Cross! We can all creep under its shade because we are so sure that there we are safe. It is the most grateful shade. The light that throws this shadow may be fierce, may be strong, may be wellnigh unbearable, but it shines through the cross, and we are safe. There again is the way for us, to see how our shadows fall, as we stand by our own light or shine from another's lighting; we must be sure that it shines at all times through the cross. Then the shadow will surely become the secure

refuge of many a fainting soul. Because our shadow has become, through our thought and carefulness, the Shadow of a Cross.

WHERE THE SEA CALLS

MY dream brings out of the past, an old farmhouse standing up on the ridge between the moors on the one side, and the slope of the land to the sea on the other. A straight built house with garden lying to the west. The sound of the North Sea ever in the ears of the farm folk. The strong North Sea that beats on Bamburgh rocks, and wide stretch of golden sands. I dream again of the brave farm mother with her young family of boys and girls to bring up, and send out into the world. A brave old lady who once faced a madman, who with loaded pistols held at her head travelled with her from Belford to Berwick. She joined the coach at Belford, and had hardly been seated when she found herself dared to move or call out. She sat there and quietly waited till Berwick was reached, when she was rescued and the man found to have escaped from Morpeth Asylum. The same brave Bamburghshire mother gave three sons to the sea, two found graves in far distant seas; one was lost with his ship in the China Sea his fate being so uncertain that for a whole year they would not tell his mother of his death. No wonder living on that strong North-

umbrian coast the boys all followed the sea or struck out for other lands. The very air they breathed in with their morning meal of porridge and milk sang of the sea, of brown boats, and strong fisher folk. The children knew the ways along the coast from Budle Bay to Craster point, where early and late bits of wreck are to be seen on Craster shore. Legend and lore of all the country round they carried in their hearts, and they lived in smuggling times, though the house mother of that family on the hill would have naught to do with such traffic. Yet if a bottle of Hollands was left under some gooseberry bush, that was no reason for saying such a gift was smuggled goods. Bamburgh folks speak with a burr of their own, an accent that clings to Bamburghshire people through long lives, through many scenes and many travels in far Countries. The love of the sea, the love of the bays on the Bamburghshire coast, the love of the great castle of Ida, with the Farne Islands out to sea, brings many a Bamburghshire man and woman back to lie in the old churchyard. The churchyard where Grace Darling lies, and where also sleeps the brave old farm mother, who gave two sons to a sailor's grave, and whose grandchildren are now scattered through the wild world of Britain's Colonies with the love of the old farm place deep rooted in their hearts.

TO LIVE IS TO DESIRE

I

I WANT the full corn in the ear, the corn and the
blade

I want the bitter with the sweet, no matter what is
paid.

I want the blossom and the fruit, no matter what it be,
I want the heart of all the apples, ripe upon the tree.

2

I want the middle of the storm, that sweeps about the
hill.

I want to stand where others stand, when summer holds
us still.

I want the beauty of the night, the fairness of the day.
I want the whole that life can give, of love, or work
or play.

3

I want to feel the flood again, the river in full spate,
I want to go with outstretched hands, with heart and
mind elate,

To search and find, to seek, and know, is ever now my
quest,

The secrets of the human heart close guarded, I would
wrest.

4

I want to see the clear white light, that breaks across
the world.

I want to know the mystery, of tender lives unfurled.

I want to gather in my heart, the spring life breaking
forth.

I want to know the summer song, and all that makes
it worth.

AFTERNOON

I

THE afternoon is slipping fast away,
The sky is turning softer gray to gray,
The hedgerows stand more black against the road,
And heavy seems the last brought in cart-load.

2

The sunset crimsons back beyond the wood,
The sickle moon will rise love where we stood.
The warm red earth turns black in the far field,
And day to dusk, and twilight now must yield.

3

The sheep are lying white against the hill.
And out of sight one coughs and then is still.
The gray of dusk is slipping into night,
And cottage answers cottage with its light.

4

The wild duck flights across the darkening pond,
A heron flaps away, then lights beyond,
The water hen is running 'mongst the reeds,
Each wild fowl seeking rest; no other needs.

5

The ploughman brings his horses down to drink,
Cheery, though tired, standing on the brink,
The day's work done, the wondrous night will come,
When men and beast are foddered, then comes home.

THERE ARE NO DEAD

I

DEEP in the dark they are hidden,
Down under the sod,
Sleeping the while they are bidden,
Where no man has trod.

2

Warm is the earth as a mother,
Life stirs in her folds,
Kind is the earth as no other,
Most gently she holds.

3

Dead in the dark are they lying?
Not so, they but wait,
Safe from all sorrow and sighing,
While day grows late.

4

Morn until noon they are sleeping
Just there shall they wake
Waiting the Master's great reaping,
When day dawn shall break.

BLIND

I

I CANNOT see the colours in the sky,
 I cannot see the wild birds as they fly,
 I know not if there rain or shine can be,
 For all alike are day and night to me.

2

I hopeless stand upon the brink of life,
 I know one step would ending be of strife,
 Yet though I blindly follow out the way,
 I trust, that some thing keeps me if I stray.

3

I feel around that all must suffer pain.
 For me, for they, I know not what the gain,
 Yet this I know if each but hold a hand
 Of him that's next, then, safe they all must stand.

4

No use though blind to chuck away the fight,
 Another knows what wrong is, and what right,
 And by the might of nature's greatest laws
 We Godlike are, and not, just windblown straws.

5

I hear the wind, the voice of all around
 I feel the magic touch that calls by sound,
 So blind and prostrate wait what is to come,
 And hope whate'er undone, of good there still be some.

COMFORT

I

THEY say that comfort comes from being still,
That mighty ease is just surrendered will.

By giving up our strivings we do end.
And to his power our stubborn wills must bend.

2

They say, if self we lay at other's feet
Each fight with self we win, with no retreat,
And out of all our warfare we may make
Strength out of weakness ; human hearts the stake.

3

Then lay ourselves upon that altar stone
For other's good, albeit all alone,
And in such self-surrender may we lie
That living we may there for others die.

BY DIVERSE WAYS

I

THERE are broken threads, I cannot knit to-night,
There are thoughts astray, that will not bear the
light,
Hopes and fears of wild rash wandering ways,
The crushed up longings of a hundred days.

2

There are untrod roads I see them stretch afar,
There are untold hills before I reach that star,
Endless broken bridges, barriers thrust aside,
And all the gateways standing gaping wide.

3

Surely beyond the ridge, I see it stand out clear,
There shines the guide post, by which I know to steer.
Silver bright, the glad clean sweeping road.
And at the sunset, lay down every load.

4

Leave broken things, there comes some time an end
When all unfinished things (towards this way) will
 bend,
Wildings born of the great untamed wind;
All gathered up at sunset, we will find.

BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

I PRAY thee, O God, of thy good kindness
That in thy light, I may show charity.
I pray thee, O God, of thy good kindness
That in thy sight I may show charity.

I pray thee, O God, of thy just pity
To grant me light, that I may soon forget.
I pray thee, O God, of thy just pity,
To grant me sight, that I may soon forget.

I seek thee, O God, of thy good kindness
Show me the way, that I may stand upright.
I seek thee, O God, of thy good kindness
Here let me stay, that I may stand upright.

Only with thee, O God, to show me pity
Find I the way, so I may stand upright.
Only with thee, O God, to show me pity
Dare I to say, that I may stand upright

BY THE SOUTH POLE

I

I DREAM the cold white lands in Southron seas,
Where high the waves are tossed.
I dream the fogs that veil those Southron shores
Those dread black cliffs ne'er crossed.

2

I see the ships that sail those Southron seas,
That lift, and heave, and strive.
I know they feel the darkness and the stress,
They smell the ice arrive.

3

I dream the cold of moonlight nights at sea,
When the long rollers heave.
I dream the sea that swells, and clinging swells,
And spells of magic weaves.

4

I dream the clash of wave on Southron shores,
Those cold volcanic rocks.
I dream the ship a harbour seeks and seeks,
The land the good ship mocks.

5

I dream the green wave sweeps along the ship.
I dream the ship's alive.
I know she butts her way right down that shore,
With heave, and heft, and dive.

DREAM XX

I DREAMT of the golden palace,
I dreamt of a wonderful sea,
And every bit of that palace
Was surely made for me.

I saw there such beautiful colours,
I saw there such wonderful waves,
And all of those rainbow colours
Were bending over my graves.

I dreamt of the thousands kneeling,
I dreamt of the great white throne,
And each of those white ones kneeling,
Was kneeling there alone.

I dreamt of a golden message,
I dreamt of a far-away cross,
And those who know not the message
Do suffer greatest loss.

HOMEWARDS

I

COLD, it is cold, and my sad heart is still.
 The day is gray, and dark, and clouds
 Scud o'er the sky, the rain blots out the hill.

2

Strange is the light and my sad eyes are blank.
 The way is rough and long ; the thorns
 Grow o'er the path, the weeds are thick and rank.

3

Hard it is hard the way my heart will take.
 The latch is fast, the lock is rude,
 Perish will I, and love itself's at stake.

4

Knock ye must knock the gudeman is inside.
 The fire is lit, the supper laid,
 Bend but your head and wait whate'er betide.

SONG

I

I SPOKE not a word as I waited,
 I waited the whole day long,
 And just as I tired of waiting
 He came to me with a song.

2

I gave not a sign as I waited,
Just stood by the window pane,
And just as the evening ended,
He walked to me up the lane.

3

I gave not a smile as I waited,
I lifted my head so high,
And just as the smile was dawning,
He came to me out of the sky.

4

I thought no more of my waiting,
Just bent my head to his hand.
Never now do I tire of smiling,
He talks to me where I stand.

THE MOTHER

I

SUCH a toddling tot that scarcely yet can walk,
Just the wee-est thing, that scarcely yet can talk,
Just looks up, for that dearest smile on earth,
The mother's smile, who stands so tall upon the hearth.

2

She sits before the fire on her creepie stool,
And knits in peace when heart, and home are full,
She need not watch the baby, cross the floor,
She knows 'tis safe; the gate is in the cottage door.

3

With gentle steps she moves, the fireplace to redd ;
But white and soft her hands to touch the baby's head ;
The coarse gray wool slips down amongst her feet,
The "Scarlet" wool that makes the stockings neat.

4

The old stone floor, is pictured all in white,
The pattern that grannie taught, that other night,
Before she left for good her home beyond the hill,
To cleave to him, who's passing now the window sill.

A DESERT DREAM

THE cry came from the city, where lights shone white in the clear light of the desert night. The call to prayer "Allah Ul Allah"—"No God but one and Mahomet is his prophet." We hastened on at the call, and with beating hearts, wondered where those others were we had left behind, far out in the vague blueness of night in the desert. The camels had given out some miles back, and we two had ridden on the best of them for help, to the town lying in front of us. An unknown city, that yesterday had been but a vague dream to most of us; as we only knew of its existence from the guide, and him we barely trusted. Now it lay in its beauty sleeping before us. The faint cry died away as we jerked our reins, and sailed on our ships of the desert into the track leading to the gate of the city.

A few date palms lined the approach, and tents of a few nomads lay white in the moonlight. We entered the city by a dark gloomy mud-walled archway, to find a narrow street, filthy and dark. The guide urged his camel on, till we came to about the centre of the town, where we stopped by a low doorway. The door was opened by an old woman, who hastily closed it again, and we were left standing outside. Again the guide knocked, this time giving three peculiar taps. This seemed at first to bring no response, but after waiting about a quarter of an hour the door was again opened by the same old woman. Upput for the night we demanded, and were at once led inside to a great courtyard, empty as far as we could see, save for a few palms in great tubs, and a fountain in the middle. We asked the woman for the master of the house, as we wanted help to bring in our friends and the baggage. She would inquire;—and again she left us. Being lost in the gloom of the courtyard we could not see by which door she had entered the house. The guide and I felt that there was something strange in such a reception at an inn; and I asked him if he were sure that we had come to the right place. “Yes, it was all right.” Besides, there were the three knocks to make sure, as without that signal, we knew we could not have got the door opened. The city was a lawless one right in the heart of the desert. A big strapping Arab carrying a lantern came at this time into the courtyard,

and behind him a man to whom he at once gave the care of our camels. Help for our friends, we explained, was what we wanted. "Yes, for Bacheesh certainly" came the answer; with a few words to the Arab groom, and a gesture to follow, to ourselves, he led us again out into the narrow street. We followed the landlord some way, till he bade us wait and he would bring men and fresh camels. We had no choice but to trust the man, as we knew of no European Consul or business man in the town, and had not meant to take this town on our route across the desert.

Patiently waiting, with hand alert to find the butt of our revolvers, we stood in the murky stillness of the street, in a silence unbroken, save for the snarling of the dogs scavenging amongst the debris thrown out into the street. Presently we heard the plop plop of the camels' feet on the mud pavements of the roadway, and the Arab appeared with two camels, declaring that only the guide and he should go back for the others as I must be tired out; and besides; the two camels were all he could get at such an hour. There being no choice at that time of night; I was obliged to give all instructions to the guide, and trust to luck that they would all appear safely before morning. The landlord came again, and swinging the lantern high and low, we went back to the inn.

This time as we crossed the courtyard he took me into the interior of the house, evidently a fair

sized ordinary Arab inn. The old woman was cooking conscous over a brazier in one corner of the room, in another corner, coarse rugs were spread over cushions to form a bed. They explained that after I had eaten I could sleep here for the night. The conscous was very good, and the old woman made me a cup of Arab coffee, and gave me a handful of dates before leaving me for the night, going out of the room by the door into the courtyard.

Tired with the long day on camel back, soothed with the mystery and silence of the house, which evidently was strongly built with thick mud walls, and which excluded all sounds from the city; I soon lay down. Putting matches and revolver handy to find at an instant's alarm, I took my courage in both hands and simply went to sleep. Waking suddenly I wondered where on earth I was, or if on earth at all, the light was so weird, my surroundings so different from what I expected, that I started up in alarm. The scene was so unusual I just lay down again on the cushions, and looked on in amazement. I could look right out into the desert through the uplifted flap of the tent. The moon was about three quarters full, and the whole world around seemed full of mystic white light. The front of the tent as far as I could see, was thronged with horsemen, hundreds of them, all in the white Arab burnoose gleaming in the moonlight. Each man's sword was naked in his hand, and the spear carried

on the saddle, glanced as its pennon swung in the breeze. Round and round they circled by companies, drifting here and there like snowflakes, in bewildering convolutions before my dazzled eyes. Where had they all come from? And why was I lying idle and unheeded in the tent, feeling more like a disembodied spirit than a dour matter-of-fact Scotsman, in full possession of life and limb? Slowly the light faded, and I was again sleeping in the dark room of Mustapha's old inn.

Presently I felt I must wake; must see what was going on, so cautiously before opening my eyes, I felt for revolver and matches: to my horror they were not there. With a feeling of loss I looked all round, and again I was away out in the desert, again lying on the string-bed in an open tent. This time it was daylight, almost noon, judging from the shadows of the tent, the heat haze in the distance and the full warm light thrown over the gray of the desert sand. Sand dunes to right and left; but in front, a straight track right to the edge of the desert, downward sloping to the sea. There not very far off on the shore, were brown Arab babies fluttering about, plashing and prancing in the shimmering glancing sunshiny sea. How had I got to the sea? The city where I went to sleep that evening, was right in the heart of the desert: miles and miles away from any part of the country that touched on the seaboard. Still there I was, lazily watching a picture not often given to a simple Scotsman, desert

air, desert sand, desert sky, and desert bairns, at play on a desert bordered sea.

I never attempted to speak: to get up or ask where I was, I just took it all for granted, and looked at, and thought of it all, as part of the wonderful entertainment perpetually provided by desert travel. By the time my thoughts had reached the point of wondering where I was, already I was back in Mustapha's dark room, and asleep.

Surprised I woke again, this time wide awake at once, or seemingly so, for the experiences were so strange, maybe I dreamt them all.

The desert wind was rising, the sand was curling up in little spirals, all round. The sides of the sand dunes seemed to be shifting: I watching again through the open door of the tent.

The heat haze had given way to clear daylight, rapidly changing under the influence of the wind, to the dark of a sandstorm. Far in the distance the blackness of the storm could be plainly seen, as it approached with rapid strides. The stronger puffs of wind coming first, swallowing up the tiny breaths that blew the sand spirit spirals, up into the air. I lay still, I did not do as I should naturally have done in any other sand storm, sprung to close the tent flap; but idle, lay and watched the oncoming storm of drifting sand, drifting in great clouds nearer and nearer, blotting out the track to the shore, the rocks to the right, and the palm trees on the left. Blotting out the gray angry sea, till nothing seemed left but

sand; clouds of dark gritty sand that came down on the tent, like the very essence of the demon of the storm. In an instant I was enveloped in an overwhelming cloud of sand and shrinking back on the string bed, I became unconscious, under the terrible power of the most dreadful of all desert experience. Asleep in the old mud walled town. I woke feeling as though I had indeed been overwhelmed by the maddest spirit of the desert.

Awake again, I wondered if it were morning, and my friends arrived: or was I again awake in the tent out there facing the sea. Looking up with anxious amazement, I noted that it was not the track down to the shore I had seen before, but a small green oasis with a temple, and a well, surrounded by stretch on stretch of desert. Presently the silence was broken by the call to prayer, it echoed and echoed through the trees, beat and beat on the white walls of the temple and re-echoed over the desert, till it beat back on the tent, like some trumpet call of fate.

I felt beaten, stunned, but bound to get up and send out in answer, a counter call, a call that would out-trumpet, beat down, out-sound the call of the Arab Monk, who with tremendous voice sent out over the desert morning air the call, "Allah Ul Allah," "There is no God but God." I felt impelled to strike out against the overpowering force of the old Mohammedan cry; so true and now so false as they add Mahomet is his prophet.

Powerless to utter a sound, I lay and heard the

call re-echoing through the desert. Then tired and stunned by a vague powerful emotion I drifted into unconsciousness, and I suppose was carried back to the room in the dark old inn.

Then I woke with a feeling of unreality very strong upon me, to find it all dark and a great knocking at the door.

I felt for the matches and lit one to find the old man's lantern lying by my side; lifting it, I found the catch of the door and opened it just in time to see the Arab guide bringing my friends into the courtyard. It was almost morning before they and our baggage were safely disposed in the room where I slept. With the quick dawn of the east, the bright uprising of the sun, there flashed into my heart the thought, those Christian friends of mine, were the answer to that cry that had rung through the night. They came, and with them the white light of Christ knocking at the door of the temple in the desert, able to give a stronger cry than that of the Arab Muezzin call. Not "Allah Ul Allah and Mahomet is his prophet," but "There is no God but God, the Father; and Jesus is his Son."

THE ADVENTURE OF DEATH

WHEN one thinks of an adventure, how one at once thinks of a journey, a setting out to get to the end of something.

Do we come upon adventures sitting still? I hardly think so, the mere fact of the adventure having arrived shows that we, or circumstances, or environment have changed.

The adventure of a small child tumbling across the floor, for the first time able to stand erect, what an event! What a change for that small person. Life in its small compass, never again the same. A child who first braves the dark, essays the unknown; another step in life, another small adventure.

Through life it almost seems, as if we gathered adventures as we move. Do we seek them? or, do they seek us? I think they come to those who see. How many find adventures, wonderful happenings that strike thrills through all the heart and soul.

Some natures go through life blankly, everyday round, everyday speech, everyday thinkings, and miss the adventure that others, in their place find ready for their opportunity: for their delight or for their discomfiture. Adventures come to those who seek, there is no doubt of that, but they can be found nigh at hand. No need to travel far, or

to make more than perhaps half a day's journey to come upon the most wonderful, the most gracious happenings, that can make humble life adventurous.

Adventure lives within us, not outside: we cannot gather the outside world, outside people, outside thoughts, into our adventures: but first it must be ours, our own way that we are travelling, our own stand in the battle of life, or our own fight for others' good. Then, 'as we have open hearts, open eyes, open ears, do we find adventure in the lives of other folk.

Nothing venture, nothing win, is the old, old proverb, and well adapted for the shrinking soul, as for the most adventurous.

Love is a great adventure, to the few who possess the spirit of adventure, just as all life is a great adventure to those who are brave and courageous.

There is a courteousness in the adventure of love that makes it a bit of the old chivalry of the Middle Ages. Brings back thoughts and hopes and ways that before this adventure was adventured, had faded out of a grown man's life, since the early affectionate adventure of his childhood. Love strong as death and as sweet, that lifts a man up to the highest heights of his being to adventure dangers and poverty, or wealth joy, or sadness: or the greatest of all adventures for love, to lay down one's life for one's friend. Yes: here we have arrived at the greatest adventure of all, the adventure of Death.

Death; not the mere act of dying but the whole that begins then, and comes after, is in that word.

The Adventure of Death, not lightly to be undertaken, not without full armour, not without great courage, great strength, or a profound weakness. Weakness, that on the impulse given to all in a moment of wild self-sacrifice, plunges heedless of life, except as the way of adventure, into the Adventure of Death.

Strong men stretch out their hands sending their hearts before them, to prepare the way. They make all the adventure of life subordinate to the great last adventure when they take the great step into the unknown. Not so unknown after all, as all that has gone before prepares for what is to come.

Some shrink from the great momentous step just as they have shrunk from many a chance to attain, forgetting that to-day is only the beginning of the adventure of to-morrow. Will not the way of the adventure of Death be just the same as an army fully equipped, fully provided, awaits the moment of battle, when ready at command, time finished, comes the Adventure of Death.

We do not speak now of the adventure as accomplished. As we know not to-morrow's bringing, we cannot know the to-morrow of Death. So far we know, that as to-morrow we may wake to fresh adventure here, so there, we know we wake to carry on that great adventure. It is a strange way, the way of the unknown. An unknown world, a place

with something ineffable for every adventurous soul, with the certainty that all will be satisfied, that the adventure will be carried through to its uttermost end; an end that lies not in the hands of the adventurer, but in the hands of the Great Commander himself, who stretches out hands to those who cross the great gulf and who helps those trembling ones, with clear courageous brow, to essay the great Adventure of Eternity.

JUST ONE THING

OUT into the night.
 Oh! soul of mine out into the night.
 There is naught in all the world,
 But the Cross of Christ
 To bring thee light.
 Out into the night.

Out into the day.
 Oh! soul of mine out into the day.
 There is naught in all the world,
 But the Cross of Christ
 To keep thy way.
 Out into the day.

Out into the fight.
 Oh! soul of mine out into the fight.
 There is naught in all the world
 But the Cross of Christ
 To bring thee might.
 Out into the fight.

* * * * *

Nay, Christ says wait
Watch ye and pray,
And in the light of day
Seek not the night.

Nay, Christ says stand,
Broken hearts bind,
And in this might wilt find,
Seek not the fray.

Nay, Christ says sit,
Take Mary's place,
And in this life's fierce race
Bind on my Cross.



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